



A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH-BASED DISCIPLINARY STRATEGIES AND INTERVENTIONS FOR STUDENT DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT

Dr. Louis Jinot Belle

Department of Education, Open University of Mauritius, Reduit, Mauritius.

ABSTRACT

This paper examined the various research-based disciplinary strategies and interventions that state secondary school principals may adopt and implement in an attempt to effectively manage student discipline. It analysed the current custodial perspective of student discipline that are briefly criticised in order to find the appropriateness of using preventive, proactive and positive disciplinary interventions. It recommends that principals teach socio-emotional skills that guide the student to develop self-discipline.

KEYWORDS: Research-based Disciplinary Strategies, Student Discipline, Socio-economic Skills.

INTRODUCTION:

Discipline is the absence of misbehaviour and the ability of the student to make the difference between right and wrong, and between socially acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (Belle, 2017). It is a multidimensional phenomenon that may be defined from various perspectives (Edinyang, 2017). However, in this paper, it is viewed from two perspectives. The traditional view of discipline is that discipline is the degree of order and structure that is required to maintain socially desirable behaviour from students (Ugboko & Adedwura, 2012). Discipline may also be viewed from the humanistic perspective whereby it is regarded as "the process of helping the students to learn more effectively and to develop positive social-emotional behaviour" (Olley, Cohn & Cowan, 2010). These two definitions supplement each other to give a broader meaning to discipline in the modern schools, in which the physical, emotional and intellectual safety of students are the priorities of the principal (Themane & Osher, 2014).

The discipline problem is a major school problem in Mauritius. It is causing much degradation to the culture of learning and teaching in the state secondary schools. The school climate also is worsening since there is the absence of a healthy and positive learning environment. The various forms of learner indiscipline in Mauritius are scratching the educators' and the principal's car, improper uniform, hooliganism, immoral acts, alcohol and drug abuse, bullying, physical aggression, writing and using foul language, smoking cigarettes and marijuana within the school compound, bunking classes and playing truant, being disrespectful of the principal and educators as the school authority, and lateness (Ramjanally, 2015; Ramharai, Curpen, Mariaye & Ramful, 2006; Jeeroburkan, 2016). Belle (2007) found that these manifestations of student indiscipline constitute one of the school factors that demotivate educators in state secondary schools in the Flacq district of Mauritius. In a recent study carried out in selected Mauritian state secondary schools on student discipline, Belle (2017) found that the current education system has flaws that causes disruptive behaviour among students. These factors are institutionalised private tuition in secondary schools, a lack of extracurricular activities, automatic promotion, the centralisation of disciplinary policy for dealing with student discipline, and the employment of supply educators on contractual basis.

On account of the current student discipline situation which is alarming and worsening in the state secondary schools, it is of utmost importance to look into the possible disciplinary interventions that the principal may adopt and implement in order to maintain order and safety of the students as well as teaching them self-discipline.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The purpose of this paper is to examine disciplinary strategies and interventions that have proved effective in schools which adopt a school-wide positive behaviour system. Such strategies and interventions are known as the research-based strategies and interventions. A review of the evidence-based disciplinary strategies in this paper will necessitate the reconceptualisation of the concept of student discipline from a more positive perspective instead of equating discipline to punishment.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

A research-based disciplinary intervention is defined as "a curriculum and educational intervention that has proven to be effective for most students based on scientific studies that use empirical methods, including rigorous and adequate data analysis, have been applied to a large study sample, are replicable, show direct relations between the intervention and student progress and has been reported in a peer-reviewed journal" (Chafouleas, 2013). Therefore, such interventions

are reviewed and discussed in this paper.

Pre-correction:

Pre-correction is an instructional process in which the educator teaches expectations, routine and rules in an attempt to prevent the student from misbehaving. For this strategy to be effective, Haydon and Scott (2008) suggest seven steps, namely (a) the identification of the context of the predictable behaviour, (b) the specification of the predictable and expected behaviour, (c) educators should take into consideration how to change the context of the situation, (d) educators should rehearse the appropriate behaviour with students, (e) educators should determine how they will reinforce appropriate student behaviour, (f) expected behaviour should be prompted, and (g) this process must be monitored.

Choice-making:

Choice is defined as the act whereby the students select a preferred alternative from among several familiar options (Shevin & Klein, 1984). The principal's as well as the educators' role is to teach students how to make effective and good choices. Lane, Cook and Tankersley (2013) suggest six steps to effectively guide students in making effective choices as a prevention technique: (a) the principal offers the student to make a choice of at least two offered options; (b) the principal asks the student to make a choice based on the options; (c) the principal waits for the student to make a choice; (d) the student responds; (e) the principal prompts the student to make a choice if, after waiting for the pre-delimited amount of time, the student has not yet made a choice; and (f) the educator reinforces the choice options, given the selected item to the student. When the students choose and the educators and principal know their choice and preferences about the curriculum activities and instructional methods, this reduces the occurrence of disruptive behaviour from an average of 8 % to zero % (Lane, Menzies, Bruhn & Crnabori, 2011).

Self-management:

Cooper, Heron and Heward (2007) define self-management as the application of the individual to change tactics that produce a desired change in behaviour. Self-management skills such as goal-setting, self-evaluation, self-reinforcement and self-punishment must be taught to student. They help students gain awareness of their present behaviour and demonstrate positive results in terms of on-task behaviour and work completion.

Rules and behaviour expectations:

Rules provide structure and consistency, and this allows the principal to maintain a positive learning environment and provide ethical, social and legal accountability. Four pre-requisite conditions that ensure students are cognizant of the rules are (a) the principals should teach school rules, (b) they should also teach classroom rules and expectations systematically, (c) when students follow rules, they must be acknowledged and praised, and (d) practices should be in place for monitoring and reviewing rules (Colvin, 2010). Rules should be explicitly modelled, practised and reinforced, and when the student fails to behave correctly, the principal should have a booster session for follow-up through prompts and reinforcement until he/she behaves properly. He/she must positively state a few rules, explain the expectations, positively reinforce the student to follow them through behaviour-specific praise, and establish consequences for undesirable behaviour (Carr & Chearra, 2004).

Check and connect:

This intervention relies on a monitor to facilitate the student's connection with the school. The monitor checks this connectedness through tardiness, absenteeism, bunking classes, behaviour referrals and academic progress. Then, the prin-

principal uses individualised student-focused interventions like relationship building and routine monitoring (Horner, Sugai & Anderson, 2010). A student may check in daily with a para-professional, get feedback and check out with him/her at the end of the day.

Contingency contracting:

This intervention involves the establishment of a written behavioural contract between the student and the principal, regarding the performance of the specific target behaviour and the exchange (Henley, 2010). It also involves three components: the task, the consequence and the recording sheet (Martella, Nelson, Marchand-Martella & O'Reilly, 2012). In fact, it gives the principal the opportunities to teach alternative replacement behaviour and reduces undesirable behaviour (Hulac, Terrell, Vining & Verstein, 2011). Besides, it gives students a sense of ownership and responsibility of their own behaviour (Manning & Bucher, 2013).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Some of the research-based disciplinary interventions have been reviewed in this paper and it is obvious that they are mainly preventive in nature and therefore they promote positive behaviour among students. They are not punitive and they respect the student's dignity. It is recommended that state secondary school principals in Mauritius adopt such measures which are student-focused. It is also obvious that these interventions help the student to gain the necessary skills to become self-discipline. Of course, the principal needs the collaboration of the educators to be able to put into practice and monitor student discipline. The educators are in the classroom and they can closely work with the students and monitor their behaviour progress. The principal should also teach the socio-emotional values in the regular morning assembly and the educators should do so in their classroom. Teaching rules and behaviour expectations, self-management skills such as goal-setting, self-evaluation, self-instruction, self-reinforcement and self-punishment, and choice making skills are important skills that promote self-discipline in students, particularly the adolescents who are matured enough to understand the importance of regulating their own behaviour.

CONCLUSION:

From the above review of the research-based disciplinary interventions, it is imperative that there is a paradigm shift from the punitive disciplinary measures to preventive, positive and proactive measures that promote positive student behaviour. School principals have the mandate to respect the international conventions for the protection of the Child's rights and dignity. So, they should adopt positive student discipline management.

REFERENCES:

- Belle, L. J. 2007. The role of secondary school principals in motivating teachers in the Flacq district of Mauritius. Unpublished Masters Dissertation. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- Belle, L. J. 2017. A critical review of the education system of Mauritius and the learner discipline problem in Mauritian state secondary schools. *Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 8(1), 47-55.
- Carr, J. & Chearra, S. M. 2004. *Managing challenging behaviour: Guidelines for teachers*. Dublin: Irish National Teachers' Organisation.
- Chafouleas, M. 2013. *Effective school discipline policies and practices*. NASP.
- Colvin, G. 2010. *Defusing disruptive behaviour in the classroom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E. & Heward, W. L. 2007. *Applied Behaviour Analysis* (2nd Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Pearson.
- Edinyang, S. D. 2017. Maintaining discipline in a social studies classroom. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology Research*, 3(2), 54-60.
- Haydon, T. & Scott, T. M. 2008. Using commonsense in common settings: Utilising active supervision and pre-correction in the morning gym. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 43: 283-290.
- Henley, M. 2010. *Classroom management: A proactive approach*. Merrill, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc.
- Horner, R. T., Sugai, G. & Anderson, C. M. 2010. Examining the evidence base for school-wide positive behaviour support. *Focus on Exceptional Children*. 42(8): 1-14.
- Hulac, D., Terrell, J., Vining, O. & Verstein, J. 2011. *Behavioural interventions in schools: A Responsive-to-Interventions guidebook*. New York: Routledge.
- Jeeroburkhan, F. 2016. Indiscipline in schools. *Le Mauricien*, 2 February: 5-6.
- Lane, K. L., Cook, B. G. & Tankersley, M. 2013. *Research-based strategies for improving outcomes in behaviour*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc.
- Lane, K. L., Menzies, H. M., Bruhn, A. L. & Crnabori, M. 2011. *Managing challenging behaviours in schools: Research-based strategies that work*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Manning, M. L. & Bucher, K.T. 2013. *Classroom management: Models, applications and cases*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc.
- Martella, R. C., Nelson, J. N., Marchand-Martella, N. E. & O'Reilly, M. 2012. *Comprehensive behaviour management*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Olley, R. I., Cohn, A. & Cowan, K. C. 2010. Promoting safe schools and academic success: Moving your school from punitive discipline to effective discipline. *National Association of School Psychologists*, 7-8.
- Ramharai, V., Curpen, A., Mariaye, H. & Ramful, A. 2006. *Discipline/Indiscipline and violence in secondary schools in Mauritius*. Reduit: Mauritius Institute of Education.
- Ramjanally, H. 2015. La discipline, le pire est à venir! *L'Express*, 12 September: 10-11.
- Shevin, M. & Klein, N. 1984. The importance of choice-making skills for students with severe disability. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 9: 159-166.
- Themane, M., & Osher, D. (2014). Schools as enabling environments. *South African Journal of Education*, 34(4), 1-6.
- Ugboko, F. E. & Adediwura, A. A. 2012. A study of principal supervisory strategies and secondary school discipline. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 2(1): 41-49.